House Armed Services Committee

Military Must do More to Address Stigma of Mental Illness

WASHINGTON, DC – Today the Military Personnel Subcommittee heard testimony regarding the efforts being made by the military to address mental health issues within the services.

Subcommittee Ranking Member, Vic Snyder (AR)

"The Services have made significant improvements to recognize and treat mental health issues. However, a recent report found that only 40 percent of soldiers with mental health problems reported receiving professional help during deployment. That means that 60 percent are not receiving the help that they may need. I know that we can and must do better for our service members.

"The stigma associated with mental health care is not necessarily a military problem. Mental health care remains a sensitive subject throughout society. While society is slowly changing its perception, our military leaders have the ability to tackle this issue now."

Rep. Marty Meehan (MA)

"Not all of the wounds sustained by our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan are physical. Many of our heroes are returning home with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or other serious psychiatric conditions.

"Mental health care is an extremely important issue for our servicemen and women, and I was pleased to hear support from the Department of Defense for an idea I worked to include in the House version of the Defense Authorization bill to initiate a mass media campaign to raise awareness of PTSD. This campaign would alert veterans to the treatment options available to them and help reduce the unfortunate stigma that is too often associated with mental health issues.

"We must continue to insist that care is available for all those in need and that no veteran suffering from mental health disorders slips through the cracks."

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